

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Meeting 9:00 A.M.

Adna Grange
123 Dieckman Rd.

September 19, 2013 - Meeting Notes

Authority Members Present: Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Dolores Lee, Town of Pe Ell; West Cormier, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Ken Estes, City of Montesano; Jim Cook, City of Aberdeen; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Arnold Haberstroh, City of Chehalis; Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine

Authority Members Absent: Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from August 15, 2013
- Elma-Porter Flood Mitigation Project
- Small Project Process Overview
- Draft Chehalis Basin Floodplain Management Scope of Work
- Chehalis Basin Gages Stations
- Flood Authority Work Program and Subcommittees
- Flood Warning System Payment Schedule
- Financial Report

1. Call to order

Vice Chair Valenzuela called the meeting to order.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

3. 2007 Flood: The Adna Grange Story

Bonnie Sherer gave a history of the Adna Grange and the damage to the grange in the 2007 flood. She stated that many volunteers helped clean up and other granges also helped and donated items that were lost. An unknown gentleman cleaned out the water and saved the oak floors. Donations and other services generated nearly \$12,000 to help rebuild. Ms. Sherer stated without all of the volunteer hours the grange would not have been saved.

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

5. Approval of August 15, 2013 Meeting Notes

The meeting notes were approved as presented.

6. Construction Project Updates: Scott Boettcher

Mr. Boettcher stated the Capital Budget passed effective July, 2013. Half of the money has been obligated for projects in Bucoda, Pe Ell, Cosmopolis, Montesano and Grays Harbor County. Mr. Boettcher summarized the status of each project.

Butch Ogden stated the Conservation District is proceeding with the planning process for critter pads with funds that were carried over from last year. About twenty people in Lewis County are interested in critter pads. He is working with Thurston County to start the process there. Mr. Boettcher stated there are other places that are building pads for farm equipment. Mr. Ogden stated that type of pad is specified in the budget language and they can also be built in the Chehalis Basin with the state capital funds.

Mr. Boettcher stated he is not updated on the status of the multi-purpose projects that are being designed by the Chehalis Tribe.

Mr. Vanell asked the status of the Mary's River Lumber mill. Mr. Estes stated currently the mill is doing finish work and running boards through the planer. There are no plans by Mary's River Lumber to rebuild the structures damaged in the fire. It depends on the demand for western red cedar and the protection of the site from river erosion. Mr. Vanell asked if the mill chooses not to rebuild is the sheet pile still critical for the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Estes stated once the oxbow is broken through without the sheet pile the wastewater treatment plant will be destroyed. There is also an economic factor: that mill site is owned by the City damage to the property would be a loss of public resources. The state highway would also be affected if the river eroded the mill site from a break in the oxbow.

7. Approve Scope Modification for Elma-Porter Project

Mr. Boettcher stated last November the Flood Authority developed projects to go to the Governor's work group. They called for the pre-design analysis and a final for Porter Creek junction. When the budget language came out the language for the pre-design work was not included. Mr. Boettcher is working with Grays Harbor County to develop a scope of work. The Capital Budget says a culvert needs to be installed but Grays Harbor County wants to do a study first. Staff recommended the project scope be modified to include a study of the problem before a decision is made to install a culvert.

Vice Chair Valenzuela asked for approval on the Elma-Porter project scope revision. There was consensus for the revision.

8. Approach for identifying small projects: Jim Kramer, Beth Peterson

Mr. Kramer stated part of the budget that was passed by the Legislature was an element recommended by the Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group to develop a scenario of small projects that would complement the larger projects and compare the benefits of the small projects to large projects. HDR Engineers under contract with Anchor QEA is working on small project process. The Flood Authority will have an opportunity to weigh in and provide input.

Mr. Kramer introduced Ms. Beth Peterson, HDR, to provide an overview of the purpose of this work and the process.

Ms. Peterson stated various agencies and consultant teams would work with the Flood Authority and the Work Group to identify the small projects that could reduce flood damage and come up with a potential list that can be recommended for the next budgeting cycle as well as for comparison with larger projects. The process will include review of the previous work by the Flood Authority in 2012 to

create a comprehensive list of projects. The next step will be to develop screening criteria for the type of projects and criteria for how the projects will be evaluated. These criteria would be reviewed by the Project Subcommittee. Meetings with local conservation districts and local communities will be held to get their input or suggest other projects that could be included. Once the criteria have been determined the projects will be screened based on their benefits and costs.

The Flood Authority supported the process presented by Ms. Peterson and emphasized the importance of involving the Project Sub-committee and the full Authority.

9. Scope and timing for assessment of local floodplain management programs: Jim Kramer

Mr. Kramer presented a draft scope of work. The scope builds on the work that was done in the past by the Flood Authority when it assessed the regulatory programs of each local government in the Basin. The proposed scope will look for opportunities for managing flood plains across the basin to see if there are places for more consistent management and opportunities under the National Flood Insurance Program to reduce insurance rates for people in the floodplains.

Lewis County will be the fiscal administrator and supported by the Flood Authority. Before Lewis County is asked to put out an RFP (request for proposal) the draft scope of work will go to the community development director in each jurisdiction to ensure their support. This work needs to be completed under the same timeline as the rest of the budget.

Mr. Vanell stated there have been many questions about the FEMA maps. Some people who were not previously in a flood plain are now. He asked if this had been resolved. Mr. Kramer stated not at the local level. Some of the issues have been settled at a national level and Region X will start to resolve the issues at a local level. The program was giving subsidized rates for some homeowners and businesses which are going away. That means some property owners could be paying four or five times the insurance premiums that they had been paying.

Flood Authority members supported the scope of work presented by Mr. Kramer.

10. Overview of gages in Basin: Scott Boettcher

Mr. Boettcher stated the Flood Authority paid for the installation of ten gages. Forty gages are tied to the Early Warning System. He did some checking to see how much the counties are paying USGS for their gages. Lewis County is paying a lot of additional money. Lewis County Engineer Tim Elsea is working with USGS to find some cost efficiencies. USGS has identified some gages as threatened and endangered and if they can't get additional funding those gages will close down; they are mostly in Lewis County. Lewis County is paying more on a per gage cost than we are paying WEST. If WEST could take over the maintenance on USGS gages it could save money and the endangered gages.

11. Flood Authority Work Program and use of Subcommittees: Jim Kramer

Mr. Kramer included a paper in the member packets outlining roles and responsibilities. The Primary Tasks include what the Flood Authority agreed to; some have been accomplished.

The focus of the full Flood Authority is to review capital project implementation status and make recommendations to project sponsors and OFM regarding changes necessary to meet project intent. The meetings will include review and input to the work group, guidance for the assessment of local floodplain management and for public outreach.

Mr. Cook stated originally all committees were advisory to the Flood Authority; decisions are to be made by the Flood Authority by consensus. Consensus was part of the ILA that we all signed. The language says a super majority will be used if no consensus is reached. If we are not going to attempt to come to consensus then the language should be removed.

Vice Chair Valenzuela stated we have been giving thumbs up which goes back to the original language of consensus. She stated a concern of Mr. Cook was that the subcommittees have not been meeting.

Commissioner Fund stated the education/outreach committee is meeting. When it goes out it asks everyone to join even if they are not on the committee.

Vice Chair Valenzuela stated the executive committee has not met because there has not been a reason to meet. Mr. Averill stated that in regards to the project committee, it reviewed all the projects that went into the Capital Budget. Once a project has been approved it moves forward. There will be work for that committee with the new projects we heard about today.

Mr. Pinn, in reference to the Flood Authority, stated he has never been on a committee with such a successful group of people.

Mr. Haberstroh stated we are showing the legislature that we are doing the best we can to spend the money given to us. We are doing positive things. A lot of these things were done in the past and now we are following through; new projects will require more meetings.

Mr. Cook stated there are things on the project list that were not there the last time the committee met. Mr. Kramer asked which projects. Mr. Cook stated Mill Creek was added. Mr. Averill stated Elma-Porter was not on the list. Vice Chair Valenzuela stated two things are being mixed up. One is a project list from the work group which came before the Flood Authority for consensus, and a project list that the Flood Authority generated some time ago.

The Flood Authority did not make any changes to the outline of committee responsibilities presented by Mr. Kramer.

12. Confirm early warning system costs and payment schedule: Scott Boettcher

Mr. Boettcher stated there are three jurisdictions paying for the Early Warning System. He presented a spreadsheet showing when payments are due. The costs for each jurisdiction were approved at the last meeting. Lewis County's cost has dropped some because it will be sending out fewer invoices. Ms. Napier stated the first half is due in March, 2014. Lewis County will send out an invoice a month before. Mr. Averill stated Lewis County's cost could drop more if something can be worked out with USGS and WEST. There was consensus on the payment schedule.

13. Update on Governor's Work Group: J. Vander Stoep, Karen Valenzuela, Jim Kramer

J. Vander Stoep provided an overview of the Work Group process for the coming year. The work group has set dates for workshops to present the work that Ms. Peterson and others are doing. The first will be on November 13 scheduled at the Great Wolf Lodge.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated that the Legislature approved the \$28 million package effective July 1, 2013. Nearly \$15 million is for local projects and that is the principal focus of the Flood Authority.

The work group includes Karen Valenzuela, Vickie Raines, Jay Gordon, David Burnett, Sandy Triggs, and J. Vander Stoep. The Governor formed this task force and the Legislature gave it direction to oversee \$9.2 million of the \$28M and recommend the next steps for flood damage reduction and aquatic species enhancement.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated the work group is looking for the optimal method of water retention: what structures work best for damage prevention, and what can be done to enhance and protect aquatic species. .

The Power Point presentation by Mr. Vander Stoep included:

- Dam Feasibility
- Hydrology and Hydraulics
- Scenario of Small Flood Damage Reduction Projects
- Survey of Floodplain Structures
- Comparison of Alternatives

Mr. Cook stated at one time hydroelectric was a possible scenario. Under this is hydro still on the table? Mr. Vander Stoep stated there has been almost no discussion at the work group level. That question will be addressed during the process and a recommendation will be made by the Work Group by November 2014.

- Aquatic species Enhancement Plan
- Identification of Aquatic Species under way
- Wildlife will be Assessed Too
- Overview
- Elements of Process
- Workshops
- Budget Summary (Anchor QEA and others)

Vice Chair Valenzuela stated it was through this process that the Chehalis Tribe became involved again, which has been very important to the Flood Authority's work.

14. Public Comment

Al Smith understands that there may be some disappointments for this organization but he applauds the kinks that have been worked out that the Legislature doesn't have to worry about. Disagreements can be worked out and he encouraged that dialogue to take place. This organization needs to stay alive and well for years down the road.

A speaker stated he was impressed that the \$9 million project is under way. A lot of people complain about studies but it is important to get more information.

Deanna Zieske stated this group needs to stay intact. Many people are dependent on the information made available to them about the flooding progress. She expressed her concern for a WSDOT project for protecting I-5 using the Tacoma rail for an elevated highway. She asked if WSDOT can access that land by eminent domain and pursue putting in that highway. When will WSDOT begin that study?

Mr. Kramer stated WSDOT just hired a project manager. Their work is going to be tracking in sync with the process of the Work Group and there may be some additional information at the November

workshop. He did not know the answer about eminent domain. Mr. Averill stated when the WSDOT alternatives were looked at, three were rejected by the Flood Authority and an elevated highway was one of them.

Max Vogt stated he was representing the realtors in Lewis County and would get information back to them. The Flood Authority is important because knowledge is power and as the public gets knowledge it can interact with the government and can take a stance on what is happening.

15. Reports

a. Chair's Report

Vice Chair Valenzuela stated in other states citizens are experiencing terrible flooding. She asked if the Flood Authority should communicate to them as to who we are, our concerns and condolences and to show our solidarity. There were thumbs up for that suggestion.

b. Member Reports

Bucoda – Mr. Vanell stated the improvement to the levee to protect the well head is continuing. There will be a regional rail workshop on September 30 at the Centralia Timberland Library where questions such as Ms. Zieske's could be answered. Bucoda will be having a fundraising event the entire month of October with a haunted house every weekend. 40% of the profits will go back to the town for projects.

Lewis County – Commissioner Fund stated outreach efforts continue, with the next outreach event being the "Showcase Grays Harbor" event tomorrow at the Satsop Industrial Park. Last week the Dairy Federation visited her and they are making a video about flooding. Ms. Napier stated that on Monday, September 23 the Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the flood damage prevention code. Comments are welcome.

Pe Ell – Ms. Lee stated Pe Ell is working hard to spend the \$531,000 allocated to their project. She thanked Commissioner Fund for helping with budget woes and to Mr. Vander Stoep for everything he did to help get that money, and for being Pe Ell's alternate on the Flood Authority.

Chehalis – Mr. Haberstroh stated the airport levee tour would be coming up soon. The Flood Authority needs to publicize what it is doing – that we are doing more than just meeting. He likes billboards to advertise its progress. The Flood Authority needs public support if we are going to move ahead on larger projects.

Centralia – Mr. Averill stated annually the city has the authority to remove about 100,000cy of fill from China Creek. That maintenance could not be done this year because of heavy rains. The City Council had a workshop to look at strategic projects and came up with five construction projects, one of which was for flood relief. Existing levees might need attention as well.

Aberdeen – Mr. Cook stated it is nice to see participation from the agencies. He stated the US Army Corps of Engineers did not de-certify the dike in Aberdeen; it wants to re-certify it.

Montesano – Mr. Estes hopes to have contracts for Montesano's projects at the next meeting. He stated Saturday is the Fall Festival at Lake Sylvia and encouraged everyone to attend for many fun activities.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

There was no State Team report.

16. Financial Report: Lee Napier

Ms. Napier stated the expenditures for August were \$14,527. She asked for questions. There were none.

17. Meeting Conclusions: Jim Kramer

Mr. Kramer stated the meeting conclusions were: the progress on projects moving forward and over half of the money authorized by the legislature is now under contract. \$130,000 is spent annually by the local governments, which is a huge contribution to warn local residents and business of potential floods. The members approved moving forward on the small projects identified by Ms. Peterson and the assessment of the flood plain jurisdictions. There is a continued commitment to consensus.

18. Confirm next regular meeting, topics and location

The next meeting will be on October 17, a phone meeting. There are no specific agenda items yet but there will be an update on projects. The November 13 workshop can be discussed. November 21 will be a full meeting in Thurston County and he would like to get experts from FEMA about mapping and insurance rates. There were thumbs up.

The meeting adjourned at 12:06.

12:00 – 1:00 – Lunch

1:00 – 4:00 Field Tour